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past few years in response to the explosion of interest in craft brewing. Market studies have been initiated to determine the costs and the potential return on a brewing establishment for Florence. However, in each case, the numbers just don't add up to support a locally owned and operated full-scale brewing establishment.

The trend in Portland and Eugene, which both have a thriving beer culture, is to offer customers a selection of different venues and experiences in which to enjoy a beer. These brewpubs range from high-tech establishments with state-of-the-art video screens and sports packages to more basic presentations based on the industrial production roots of the beer-making process.

Unfortunately for beer drinkers in Florence, while there are many craft beers available at local restaurants and bars, these establishments are not interested in producing beer — only in selling it. The result of which has led to no brewpubs currently operating in the area.

There is one location however, The Beachcomber Pub, that has fully embraced the beer culture, offering the public 22 different draft beers to choose from, as well as a wide variety of bottled beers.

Scott Weiss is the owner of the Beachcomber and his passion for the process of creating and sharing beer with his customers is apparent immediately when asked to discuss the ever-changing craft beer business.

"I've been involved and around the beer business my entire life. My father was part of the beer business with the

Olympia Brewing Company. As an adult, I was involved in the wholesale beer and wine business until I bought the Beachcomber 15 years ago. So, I have been involved in numerous aspects of the industry my entire life and I've seen a lot of changes and twists and turns in the business over the years," Weiss said. "Back in the early '80s, there was talk that we would be down to six or eight breweries in the United States, because the smaller, regional breweries had continued to go out of business."

That scenario did not play out as many in the industry had expected for one simple reason: The major breweries forgot to listen to their customers and the rise of craft brews began.

"The biggest reason for the change was that large breweries were not receptive to the consumers and they were not providing the choices consumers were looking for," Weiss said. "The light beers were all the big brewers were giving people. For a while, imports took off and that really sparked consumer interest in other styles of beer — and you could see the consumer was looking for something different."

At the Beachcomber, there are large electronic beer menus at both ends of the bar that describe in detail the flavor qualities and alcohol content of each offering. These descriptions read more like the information often provided on the label of a wine bottle.

There are also knowledgeable staff at the pub that have studied the brewing process and can share their insights and opinions on the craft brews currently available. This focus on understanding the under-

lying basics of the ingredients and the proper timing needed to make great beer are just some of the topics discussed regularly by Weiss and a small contingent of local homebrewers.

These beer aficionados have been working towards opening some type of craft brewing establishment for more than a decade.

Don Patton is the "dean" of the group, having worked professionally as a brewer, and he believes the current surge in craft beer production and consumption can be directly traced to one man: Jimmy Carter.

"I started home brewing in 1974, before Jimmy Carter changed the law allowing people to brew as much as they wanted to brew at home. I think the basis of craft brewing started with those homebrewers," Patton said. "After Jimmy Carter, what developed was a whole level of people that were making some really good beer and they thought to themselves, 'Maybe I should start a brewpub?' So, this really came out of the culture of homebrewing and just started to grow across the United States."

Patton is now retired but one of his favorite jobs during his working years was, of course, beer related.

"I started 25 years ago this weekend working at Broadway Brewing in Denver, Colorado. We were a production brewery and we produced about 20,000 barrels a year. ... If you look at the way brewing and brewpubs are going these days, the ones that are doing well are localized and they have a strong local base of customers that support that brewpub," Patton said. "What is really saving craft brewing in the United States is

we have enough local breweries that people can go there and get a beer that was brewed there."

The call for a local brewpub is one that Weiss and Patton have been a part of over the years, but the business-savvy Weiss insists there are many challenges and the expectation of success is uneven at best.

"Our group has looked into a brewery in a couple of different ways — small to medium, in a handful of locations and, unfortunately at this time, it just doesn't make good financial sense," Weiss said. "It's easy for everyone to say 'our town needs a brewpub,' and I agree that a brewpub would be awesome here. But for those of us that have actually sat down and written a business plan, it's a very expensive venture. And yes, people will come, but will they come to it in large enough numbers to make it profitable after the initial extraordinary costs?"

The popularity of craft beers has led to a significant increase in the number of individuals employed by the brewing industry nationally, rising from just under 28,000 in 2001, to more than 69,000 in 2017.

The Oregon Brewer's Guild reports that 31,000 Oregonians are employed either directly or indirectly by the brewing industry and more than 9,000 people are employed in brewing establishments.

According to Oregon Craft Brewers Association data from 2018, there are currently 275 breweries in the state, operated by 225 different companies. Nearly 2 million barrels of craft beer were produced by these companies, with 19,000,000 people visiting Oregon breweries last year.

Local beer aficionados have seen a number of attempts, in addition to those made by Weiss and Patton, to start a full scale, multi-variety brewhouse in the Florence area over the past decade, but for various reasons none of these efforts have been successful.

The Florence Urban Renewal Agency (FURA) recently received a report from Florence City Manager Erin Reynolds updating the agency on an exploratory study conducted by a group of investors to determine the viability of building and operating a brewery in town. This study suggested failure at this time and the group indicated they would not be pursuing the idea further.

Another major change in the industry is due in part to the explosion of styles of beers available that are now being paired with food.

"In the past people looked at wine as the beverage you had with food. But now I think beer lovers have spoken, and they say beer and food go well together," Weiss said. "I think that's because the beer of yesterday that was light and refreshing didn't always go well with hearty foods. But today, we have such a variety of styles of beer, we have a lot of choices that we can pair with savory foods or spicy foods."

While the trend of pairing a specific beer with a particular dish is on the rise, so is the desire of the customer to explore styles of beer rather than a single beer from a single brewery.

"When I bought this business 15 years ago, 25 percent of our sales were craft beers and 75 percent were domestic beers like Coors, Bud and

Miller," Weiss said. "Today, we are at 18 percent domestic and the rest is craft beer. There will be a customer that comes in now and he will want to drink a double IPA, as an example, and he may not always drink the same double IPA, but he comes in looking for a double IPA. ... And there are other customers that are going to want to move around and try new things all the time."

One way that Weiss has found to become more involved in the actual process of brewing beer is a unique approach to collaboration.

"What we decided to do is go to a variety of different breweries and brew a beer with their brewers. That way, we can sell a beer that we had a hand in designing and developing that beer exclusively for our customers," he said.

Humans have been drinking beer for at least 13,000 years, with the earliest archeological evidence of fermenting grains found in the Carmel Mountains near Haifa, Israel, dating from that time period. The continued interest in the fermentation of grains to produce alcohol is unlikely to end anytime soon.

When discussing the future of the beer business in Florence and the possibility of a brewpub opening here, Weiss offers some advice for potential owners and investors.

"Will Florence ever have a brewpub? Probably, but it is going to take someone to develop a business plan that fits the area we are in," he said. "So, we may not get a lavish brewpub with lots of bells and whistles. It may have to be toned down a bit to be able to fit our demographics."

What's happening in the Siuslaw region

<p>July 13</p> <p>Woahink Lake Association Picnic in the Park Annual Meeting and Barbecue 1 p.m.; open to public Bring sides and desserts Honeyman Group Meeting Hall Yurt</p> <p>2nd Saturday Gallery Tour 3 to 5 p.m.; Open to public Various locations around Florence 2ndSaturdayGalleryTour.com</p> <p>Clay, Play & Sip with Carol Mast 3 to 6 p.m. Tickets required; 541-271-2485 Mindpower Gallery, 417 Fir Ave.</p> <p>July 14</p> <p>Mapleton Lions Club Breakfast Pancakes, Eggs, Ham and/or Sausage, 07:30 to 10:30 a.m. Cost \$7 for adults, \$4 Kids Mapleton Lions Club, 88148 Riverview Ave.</p> <p>"Remembering Leah" Benefit Performance with Nyah Vollmar With guest performers Jason Wood, William Owens and Jonah Vollmar 2 p.m.; open to public Donations accepted for the Friends of the Florence Events Center Leah Goodwin Memorial Fund Florence Events Center</p>	<p>"Life and Songs of Woody Guthrie: American Balladeer" Free Concert hosted by Adam Miller and Siuslaw Public Library 2 to 3:30 p.m.; open to public Siuslaw Public Library, 1460 Ninth St.</p> <p>Frank Huang Classical Solo Piano Concert Kathy Parson's House Concert Series 3 to 5 p.m.; reservations required RSVP to kathyhpiano@gmail.com for details</p> <p>July 15</p> <p>Florence Parent Coffee & Chat Hosted by Families Connected: Families Network 9 to 10:30 a.m.; open to parents of children with special needs River Roasters, 1240 Bay St.</p> <p>"The Bikes of Wrath" Documentary + Q&A 6:30 p.m.; tickets required City Lights Cinemas, 1930 Highway 101</p> <p>July 16</p> <p>Us TOO Florence Prostate Cancer Support Group II With Dr. Roger McKimmy Noon to 1 p.m.; Open to public Ichiban Restaurant 541-999-4239</p> <p>Florence Farmers Market From May 14 to Oct. 15</p>	<p>3 to 6 p.m.; open to public Intersection of Bay and Kingwood streets in Historic Old Town Florence</p> <p>Siuslaw Diabetes/Prediabetes Support Group Will not meet in July or August For more info, call 541-902-6059</p> <p>Disabled American Veterans Meeting 5 p.m.; Open to area veterans Florence DAV Hall, 1715 21st St.</p> <p>Florence Newcomers' Dinner 5 to 8 p.m. Every third Tuesday No-host dinner open to community members and newcomers Homegrown Public House RSVP to 541-590-3944</p> <p>Siuslaw Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society 6:30 p.m.; open to public Presbyterian Church of The Siuslaw, 3996 Highway 101</p> <p>July 17</p> <p>New York Dog Film Festival Sponsored by City Lights and Oregon Coast Humane Society 6 p.m.; tickets required City Lights Cinemas, 1930 Highway 101</p> <p>Wellness Wednesday Hosted by Beauty By Delivery</p>	<p>Wellness Spa and The Mustard Seed 6 to 7:30 p.m.; registration required The Mustard Seed, 509 Kingwood St.</p> <p>Siuslaw Genealogical Society Meeting 7 p.m.; open to public Siuslaw Public Library</p> <p>July 18</p> <p>Pacific Dunes Shrine Club Luncheon 11:30 a.m.; contact 541-997-3728 Chen's Family Restaurant, 3630 Highway 101</p> <p>Summer Reading All-Ages Movie Matinee Every Thursday in July 2 to 4 p.m.; open to public Siuslaw Public Library District</p> <p>Berkshire Hathaway Hosts Business After Hours 5 to 6:30 p.m.; open to public Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Northwest Florence, 1875 Highway 101</p> <p>Siuslaw Talespinners Toastmasters 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.; Open to public Port of Siuslaw Office</p> <p>Labor Singer George Mann Concert 7 p.m.; open to public Siuslaw Public Library</p>	<p>Coastal Writers Meet 7 to 9 p.m.; open to writers Shorewood Residences meeting room, 1451 Spruce St.</p> <p>July 19</p> <p>Florence Senior Center Lunch Fundraiser Soup, egg salad sandwich and more for \$5 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. open to all ages Florence Senior Center</p> <p>City of Florence Community Block Party Featuring 5 Guys Named Moe 5:30 to 10 p.m.; open to all On Bay Street in Historic Old Town Florence</p> <p>"Legends in Concert: Sir Elton John" Starring Jeffrey Allen 8 to 11 p.m.; tickets required Three Rivers Casino Resort, 5647 Highway 126</p> <p>July 20</p> <p>9th annual Power of Florence 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.; open to people and organizations to volunteer Begins at City of Florence</p> <p>Oregon Cavy Breeders Society's annual Cavy Show 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; open to public</p>	<p>Florence Events Center</p> <p>New York Dog Film Festival Sponsored by City Lights and Oregon Coast Humane Society 11 a.m.; tickets required City Lights Cinemas, 1930 Highway 101</p> <p>Apollo Moon Landing 50th Anniversary with Jeff Phillips 1 to 2 p.m.; open to public Siuslaw Public Library</p> <p>Summer Bingo at Ada Grange Kitchen opens at noon; bingo starts at 1 p.m. Contact Nancy Flatley at 541-997-2380 Ada Grange, 10 miles out Canary Road</p> <p>Van Fans Ice Cream Social Fundraiser for Friends of Florence 1 to 3 p.m.; open to public Florence Events Center</p> <p>Sand Master Jam 2019 2 to 5 p.m.; open to public to watch or participate Sand Master Park</p> <p>Paint and Sip with Karyllynn Keppol 5:15 to 8:30 p.m. Tickets required; 541-271-2485 Mindpower Gallery, 417 Fir Ave.</p>
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A Weekly Listing of Community Events in the Florence Area

Submit all events information to PressReleases@TheSiuslawNews.com

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- Tuesday Lunch Group (3rd Tuesday)
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• Urologist Dr. Roger McKimmy attends.

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